

# CHILD SAFETY SEATS



## A PARENT'S GUIDE

Produced in conjunction with the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety and Arizona Department of Public Safety



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# 10 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR WHEN SHOPPING

## 1. Harness type.

Harness options include:

- **3-point harness:** Connects at shoulders and at crotch. Found on infant only seats.
- **5-point harness:** Five straps, two at shoulders, two at hips, one at crotch. Considered to be one of the safest harnesses.
- **Tray-shield harness:** Padded tray-like shield that swings down and over child. Not appropriate for rear-facing babies.

## 2. Vehicle Suitability - Car seat must fit properly in your vehicle with seat belts or LATCH.

## 3. Removable, washable cover.

## 4. Does the seat recline at an appropriate angle for head support and sleeping?

This is especially important in car seats for newborns and babies.

## 5. Harness slots - To accommodate growing children. On rear-facing seats, make sure harness slots are at or below baby's shoulders, forward-facing at or above child's shoulders.

## 6. Shopping cart locks that allow seat to be secured safely to shopping carts.

## 7. Stroller compatible - Some infant seats can lock into stroller frames, allowing them to perform as both car seat and stroller.

## 8. Adjustable buckles and shields - To fit a growing child.

## 9. Convenient to use correctly each time.

## 10. Is the seat lightweight, easy to carry and to remove from/install in base? - These are especially important features with infant car seats, which are usually detached and carried more frequently than other models.



# 10 SAFETY TIPS – REMINDERS FOR A SAFE RIDE

1. Always use a car seat, starting with your new baby's ride home from the hospital.
2. All car safety seats must be installed and used properly. Make sure your child is buckled into the seat correctly, and the seat is fitted correctly in the car. Make sure harness straps lie flat and are not twisted.
3. Never position an infant seat facing forward or in front of an air bag. Even in a low-speed crash, inflated air bags can strike the seat and cause serious injury and death. Put your child in the back seat. It's the safest place in a head-on collision, the most common type of crash.
4. To ensure that your car seat is not on recall or obsolete, go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).
5. Do not use a car seat that has been in a collision; is cracked, broken or missing parts; or does not have a label with date of manufacture and model number.
6. Never use a household baby carrier as a car seat.
7. Never place padding under baby or buckle blankets or other padding under harness straps as this may interfere with restraining function of straps.
8. Babies who weigh more than 20 lbs. but who are still less than 1 year of age should continue to ride in rear-facing position to avoid risk of neck and spinal injuries.
9. When you purchase a new seat, return the completed registration card so the manufacturer can alert you to any problems or recalls. To get a registration card, or check to see if a seat has been recalled, call the Auto Safety Hotline at 888-DASH-2-DOT.
10. Most infant, convertible and forward-facing seats are certified to be used on airplanes. Booster seats are not.

## Buckle Everyone! Children Age 12 and under in the back!



# MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR CHILDREN

Children and youth from birth to age 14 represent 21% of the U.S. population. Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for children 2 years of age, and for people of every age from 4 to 34 years old.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories have child passenger safety laws ("car seat laws"). The age at which seat belts can be used instead of child restraints differs among states.

Because of these laws, more children now ride restrained, but many ride unrestrained, particularly those 4 years and older. During 2002, a total of 1,785 children from birth to age 15 were killed and 253,000 were injured in passenger vehicle crashes. Approximately 54% of this age group were unrestrained.

Although the child fatality rate has decreased since 1975, the total number of child occupant deaths is still high. Motor vehicle crashes still cause 1 of every 3 injury deaths among children. This is due in part to increases in population and over the past 20 years, the number of miles Americans travel on our Nation's highways has doubled.

The critical challenge for parents and caregivers is to properly install child safety seats. Today, more than 70% of child safety seats are improperly installed. In addition, safety belts are used incorrectly. If 100% of the motor vehicle occupants younger than age 5 had been properly restrained, an estimated 485 lives could have been saved. Even more lives of older children could be saved if they ride in motor vehicles properly restrained.

- More child motor vehicle deaths occur on Friday, Saturday and Sunday than on other days of the week. The peak time for such deaths is between 3pm – 6pm.
- Child motor vehicle deaths are the highest during the summer months.

With the introduction of booster seats for children 4 to 8 years old, the use of these belt-positioning booster seats lowers the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59%, compared with the use of vehicle safety belts. Children not properly fitted for the vehicle's safety seat belt system suffer injuries that could have been prevented. Children who have outgrown child safety seats, but are too small to ride safely in adult belts, should be properly restrained in booster seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are 4 feet 9 inches tall.

Parents and caregivers can have a strong influence on future safety belt use as their children reach maturity by insisting on their use as well as wearing them while riding in a motor vehicle.

Safety belts and child safety seats have been designed to protect drivers and passengers from death and injury during a crash. But restraints cannot save lives if they are not used, and most importantly, must be used properly.\*

**IT'S THE ARIZONA LAW:** All children under five years of age **MUST** be properly secured in a child restraint device that meets federal standard. Additionally, the safety seat system must be used and installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. NHTSA recommends that all children under 8 years of age or 4'9" should be properly secured in a child/booster seat. And if there are front-seat air bags, anyone under 12 years of age should be secured in the back seat.

## BEFORE YOU BUY

A car seat is the first important purchase you make for your child because you must buy and install it before taking your baby home from the hospital. The following information will help you choose the right type of car seat for best fit.

**Important note:** Make sure you get a seat that fits your car, your child, and that you install it correctly. Read all instructions carefully; they vary from seat to seat and vehicle to vehicle. For more information go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

\*Source: NHTSA "Facts About Children and Youth-Motor Vehicle Occupant Protection Facts"

\*Source: IIHS-HLDI Fatality Facts: Children 2002

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF CAR SEAT FOR BEST FIT

**Infant car seats:** Always rear-facing; offer best fit for newborns and support for their fragile heads and necks. Designed for babies up to 20-22 lbs. and about 26 inches long; have three- or five-point harness. Some can fit into specially designed stroller frames.

✓ **Advantage:** Best fit for newborns.

✗ **Disadvantage:** Not as versatile as convertible seats in accommodating older babies; not suitable for toddlers.

**Convertible seats:** Seats that can be used rear-facing for babies up to 30-35 lbs. and forward-facing for toddlers up to 40 lbs. All have shoulder harnesses and height settings that can be adjusted as child grows.

✓ **Advantage:** Since convertible seats accommodate child's growth from infancy through toddler stage, they're more economical than buying two separate seats.

✗ **Disadvantage:** Cannot be removed from vehicle and used as a carrier.

• **Tip:** Look for seats that can be used rear-facing for children up to 35 lbs.

• **Tip:** Make sure lowest set of harness slots is below child's shoulders for rear-facing.

**Forward-facing seats:** Designed for children at least one year old and over 20 lbs.; some models convert to belt-positioning booster seats for older children over 40 lbs. Cannot be used in rear-facing position.

✓ **Advantage:** Models that convert into boosters are good for growing children and are less expensive than a lot of convertible seats.

✗ **Disadvantage:** Not suitable for infants and small babies.

**Booster seats:** Forward-facing only; intended for children weighing 40 to 80 lbs. Must be used with vehicle lap/shoulder combination.

✓ **Advantage:** Good for older children. Easy to use.

✗ **Disadvantage:** Cannot be used for newborns or babies.

### What do they cost?

Safety seats can cost anywhere from about \$20 to upwards of \$300, depending on features. All seats sold in the U.S. must conform to current FMVSS 213 regulations.

**IT'S THE ARIZONA LAW:** All children under five years of age **MUST** be properly secured in a child restraint device that meets federal standard. Additionally, the safety seat system must be used and installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. NHTSA recommends that all children under 8 years of age or 4'9" should be properly secured in a child/booster seat. And if there are front-seat air bags, anyone under 12 years of age should be secured in the back seat.

## CHILDREN WHO SHOULD USE A BOOSTER SEAT

- A child who has outgrown a convertible child safety seat (about 40 lbs. or 40 inches).
- A child who weighs between about 40 and 80 lbs.
- Usually a child who is about 4 to 8 years old and is less than 4'9" tall.
- A child who cannot sit with his or her back straight against the vehicle seat back cushion and who cannot sit with knees bent over a vehicle's seat edge without slouching.
- For maximum protection, keep a child in a forward-facing child safety seat with full harness as long as the child fits in the seat (see the instructions for your child safety seat for best fit).

**Combination Seats:** Use harness for children who weigh between 20 and 40 pounds; use without harness for children who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds.

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Recommendations

#### Proper Child Safety Seat Use Chart

	Infants	Toddler	Young Children
<b>Weight</b>	Birth to 1 year. At least 20-22 lbs.	Over 1 year and over 20-40 lbs.	Over 40 lbs., Ages 4-8; unless 4'9" tall
<b>Type of Seat</b>	Infant only or rear-facing convertible	Convertible / Forward- facing	Belt positioning booster seat
<b>Seat Position</b>	Rear-facing only	Forward-facing	Forward-facing
<b>Always Make Sure:</b>	Children to one year and at least 20 lbs. in rear-facing seats  Harness straps at or below shoulder level	Harness straps should be at or above shoulders  Most seats require top slot for forward-facing  Check manufacturer's instructions	Belt positioning booster seats must be used with both lap and shoulder belt  Make sure the lap belt fits low and tight across the lap/upper thigh areas and the shoulder belt fits snug crossing the chest and shoulder to avoid abdominal injuries
<b>Warning</b>	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat

**NOTE:** Always check safety seat manufacturer's instructions for proper installation of your seat.

## Car Seats Save Lives!

**Use the proper restraint for the age and size of the child.**



# TYPES OF CAR SEATS & CAR SEAT USAGE TIPS



**All seats should be secured to the vehicle by the seat belts or by the **LATCH** system.**

## **Rear-facing Infant Seats – Birth to 1 year, less than 20 lbs.**

- Infant seat: Babies who are less than a year old and weigh less than 20 pounds belong in an infant seat, all of which are designed to be used in a rear-facing position only.
- Never use in a front seat where an active air bag is present.
- Tightly install child seat in rear seat, facing the rear.
- Child seat should recline at approximately a 45 degree angle.
- Harnesses/slots at or below shoulder level (lower set of slots for most convertible child safety seats).
- Harnesses snug on child; harness clip at armpit level.
- Handle down on most seats.

**Convertible Seats:** A convertible seat can be used in the rear-facing position for children who are less than a year old and weigh less than 20 pounds. The seat can be converted later to forward-facing for children who weigh between 20 and 40 pounds and are more than a year old.

## **Rear-facing Convertible Seats – Less than 1 year, up to 30-35 lbs.**

- Use a 5-point harness.
- Harness in slots at or below child's shoulders.
- Harness clip at armpit level.
- Tightly install semi-reclined.
- Keep children rear-facing as long as possible.





### **Forward-facing Convertible Seats – at least 1 year and 20-40 lbs.**

- Tightly install child seat in rear seat, fully upright.
- Harnesses in slots at or above child's shoulders (usually top set of slots).
- Harnesses snug on child; harness clip at armpit level.

**Belt-positioning booster seats. Two types - highback and backless:** Booster seats must be used in conjunction with the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt. A belt positioning booster seat raises a child so that vehicle's regular seatbelt fits properly.

### **Booster Seats – 4 yrs. to 8 yrs. unless 4' 9" tall.**

- Booster used with adult lap and shoulder belt in rear seat.
- Use a highback booster when no head restraint on vehicle seat.
- Weight limits vary 40-100 lbs.



### **Seat Belts – Children more than 4' 9" and 80 lbs. or 8 years and older.**

- Shoulder belt should rest snugly across chest, rests on shoulder; and should NEVER be placed under the arm or behind the back.
- Lap-belt should rest low, across the lap/upper thigh area – not across the stomach.
- Child can sit all the way back in the seat with knees bent over the seat edge.

With the wide variety of child restraint systems, seat belt systems and passenger vehicles, correctly installing a child restraint system can be challenging. This booklet is designed to help you identify and learn how to correct common mistakes when installing a child restraint and securing your child in the restraint. Making the right connections will help improve overall protection for your child. **Always read child restraint and vehicle manufacturer's instructions for proper use and installation information.**

# CHILD SAFETY SEAT CAUTIONS – THINGS TO REMEMBER

## **AIR BAGS** – Take a back seat to air bags.

- Children 12 and under are safest when properly restrained in the back seat.
- An infant in a rear-facing child restraint should NEVER be positioned in the path of an active frontal air bag.
- Air bags can cause serious injury or death to children, especially infants in rear-facing child seats.

## **REAR-FACING INFANT SEATS** – “Harnesses that are loose limit use.” Take up the slack.

- A harness chest clip should be positioned at the child’s mid-chest or armpit level. This keeps the harnesses in the correct position.

## **TAKE OFF THE WRAPS**

- A blanket should never be placed between the child and the harness, or underneath or behind the child.
- Put blankets over the internal harness after buckling the child in place.
- Rear-facing infant seats should NEVER be placed in a forward-facing position. Babies should ride rear-facing until at least one year of age AND at least 20 pounds.

## **REAR-FACING CONVERTIBLE SEATS**

- Harnesses on rear-facing seats should be in slots at, or slightly below, the child’s shoulders.
- For a snug fit, adjust the harness so it lies in a straight line without sagging. Place the chest clip at the armpit level.

## **FORWARD-FACING CONVERTIBLE SEATS**

- Child should remain in a forward-facing child restraint until they are approximately 40 pounds or 40 inches tall.

## **SEAT BELT SYSTEMS**

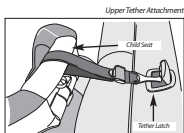
The lap belt should fit snug and low over the upper thighs. If it rides up on the abdomen, it could cause serious injuries in a crash.

- Children should sit straight against the seat back. Shoulder belts should fit snugly across the chest.
- Never allow a child to place a shoulder belt behind his/her back.
- Always use the correct child restraint system. Never use pillows, books or towels to boost a child. Doing so can compromise your child’s safety.

## **LATCH** – Lower **A**nchors and **T**ethers for **C**hildren

As of September 2002, all new vehicles and most child safety seats will be equipped with the LATCH attachments.

Upper tether attachment improves protection by attaching the top of the child safety seat more securely to the vehicle. Older model vehicles may require special hardware installation. Lower attachments make installation easier by allowing the child restraint to be attached to the vehicle without using the vehicle’s belt system.



# TAKE A MINUTE TO BE SURE...

## Know the Arizona Law!

All children under five years of age **MUST** be properly secured in a child restraint device that meets federal standard. Additionally, the safety seat system must be used and installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. NHTSA recommends that all children under 8 years of age or 4'9" should be properly secured in a child/booster seat. And if there are front-seat air bags, anyone under 12 years of age should be secured in the back seat.

## The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends:

- Never place a rear-facing child safety seat in the front seat where an active passenger air bag is present.
- Keep children rear-facing as long as possible.
- Children who have outgrown their 5-point harness system should use a belt-positioning booster seat.
- Children between 40-80 pounds should ride in the back seat in a belt-positioning booster seat, which uses the adult lap and shoulder belt. Booster seats should be used until the adult seat belt system fits children properly.



The Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Arizona Department of Public Safety and other law enforcement agencies and 21st Century Insurance are working together to ensure the safety of your children in a motor vehicle.



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